

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: PFOR, VS

SUBJECT: SENATOR KENNEDY'S LETTER ON INDOCHINA POLICY

FOR AMBASSADOR

REF: SAIGON 3729

1. FOLLOWS TEXT OF REUTERS ITEM REPORTING ON SENATOR KENNEDY'S SPEECH ON SENATE FLOOR TODAY. TEXT OF KENNEDY STATEMENT WILL BE CABLED AS SOON AS AVAILABLE. PRESS GUIDANCE WHICH BEING PREPARED FOR USE BY DEPT SPOKESMAN WILL BE TRANSMITTED SEPTEL.

2. BEGIN TEXT: BY MICHAEL KRAFT. WASHINGTON, APRIL 2.
REUTER - SEN. EDWARD KENNEDY TODAY ACCUSED THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON OF ENGAGING IN COVERUP, CENSORSHIP AND DECEPTION.

THE MASSACHUSETTS DEMOCRAT MADE PUBLIC A CONFIDENTIAL STATEMENT IN WHICH THE AMBASSADOR, GRAHAM MARTIN, SAID IT WOULD
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BE THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY TO GIVE THE SENATOR AN HONEST ANSWER

TO A REQUEST FOR A FULL STATEMENT OF AMERICAN POLICY IN INDOCHINA.

SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER PROVIDED THE SENATOR A LENGTHY POLICY STATEMENT, WHICH WAS RELEASED SUNDAY NIGHT,

BUT THE SENATOR DISCLOSED THAT MARTIN OPPOSED THE EFFORT.

IN A SENATE FLOOR SPEECH KENNEDY SAID MARTIN'S ATTITUDE IN THE CABLE "RAISES THE MOST PROFOUND QUESTIONS ABOUT WHICH COUNTRY AND WHOSE INTERESTS AMBASSADOR MARTIN IS TRULY REPRESENTING."

THE SENATOR MADE PUBLIC A MARCH 21 CABLE, LABELED CONFIDENTIAL, WHICH MARTIN SENT TO WASHINGTON IN COMMENTING ON THE SENATOR'S REQUEST FOR A POLICY STATEMENT.

THE CABLE NOTED THAT EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE IN CONGRESS TO BLOCK ADDITIONAL MILITARY AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM. THE CABLE ADDED "I THINK IT WOULD BE THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY TO PERMIT KENNEDY, WHOSE STAFF WILL SPEARHEAD THIS EFFORT, THE TACTICAL ADVANTAGE OF AN HONEST AND DETAILED ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS OF SUBSTANCE RAISED IN HIS LETTER."

KENNEDY, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES, HAD ASKED KISSINGER ON MARCH 13 TO EXPLAIN EXISTING AMERICAN OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENTS IN SAIGON, LAOS AND CAMBODIA.

MARTIN TOLD THE STATE DEPARTMENT "THE LIST OF QUESTIONS IS CLEVERLY DRAWN TO THOROUGHLY MIX UP APPLES AND ORANGES. ANY SUBSTANTIVE ANSWER WOULD PERMIT ANOTHER CALCULATED CAMPAIGN OF DISTORTION THAT WOULD PRE-EMPT THE ATTENTION THE PRESENTATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S CASE SHOULD RECEIVE." MARTIN SAID "I WOULD SUGGEST A VERY SHORT ROUTINE REPLY FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS" TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION POSITION WOULD BE THOROUGHLY COVERED IN TESTIMONY TO APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

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KENNEDY TOLD HIS COLLEAGUES THESE STATEMENTS "SHOULD OUTRAGE EVERY MEMBER OF THIS BODY, AND EVERY MEMBER OF THE CONGRESS."

KENNEDY SAID MARTIN HAS TRIED TO INTERFERE WITH INVESTIGATIONS IN SAIGON BY THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO), THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATING ARM FOR FINANCIAL MATTERS.

"HE HAS EVEN ATTEMPTED TO CENSOR THE TRANSFER OF GAO INFORMATION FROM SAIGON TO WASHINGTON," SENATOR KENNEDY SAID.

HE TOLD THE SENATE, "IT IS DISTRESSING TO ME, AS IT IS TO MANY OF OUR COLLEAGUES, THAT AFTER ALL WE HAVE GONE THROUGH IN VIETNAM -- AFTER ALL THE DECEPTION WE HAVE

WITNESSED OVER OUR INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA -- AND AFTER YEARS OF DEBATE THAT NEARLY TORE OUR SOCIETY APART -- WE SHOULD STILL HAVE AN AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE HONEST ANSWERS, AND WHO CONTINUES TO PRACTICE THE OLD TECHNIQUES OF COVER-UP AND DECEPTION FOR A CAUSE THE PEOPLE NO LONGER SUPPORT."

HE SAID, "THIS RAISES SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE QUALI-

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